

THE PREACHER IN THE POKER GAME.

A Tale of His Overthrowing by the Charity Seeker Who Came Sudden to Arkansas City.

"There was a preacher fellow come here to campmettin' quite some years ago," said old man Greenhut as he sat chewing the end of a cigar that would not burn satisfactorily, "and he was always talkin' about money. There's a plenty of 'em comes that talks money most of the time, but they're the kind that preach about puttin' it in the hat when it's passed round. This one was different. They said his name was Eliphaz Knobs, or suthin' like that, an' he sure was a powerful hand with the mouner when he got 'em up to the bench. 'Uster make 'em holler so's you'd hear 'em half a mile."

"But the Rev. Eliphaz Knobs's strong suit, so to speak, 'peared to be preachin' agin money. He was always sayin' that money was 't'wixt 'em an' 'em, an' that the same thing, an' there ain't no doubt but there's sense in it if you look at it the right way. Of course, if money was ev'rythin' 't' a man needed, he wouldn't have no call to use when he got it. He wouldn't need tobacco, nor red liquor nor no other necessities, 'n' any fool c'd see how ridiculous that is. But them that says it don't never 'pear to git tired sayin' it."

"This here Knobs, 'peared like he thought he was goin' to git up to the mouner's bench. An' he sprang this money rag on me. Well, I says, 'I don't know but what you're right, but what is it you reckon is needed outside of money?' An' he says 'Savin' grace,' he says."

"So I says to him I reckon you're right again. Savin' grace is needed, I says, 'an' needed bad, but there's other things too. A man, I says, has to have savin' grace, there ain't no doubt, but he's got to have a savin' knowledge of draw, too."

"What'd become of the hull fabric of civilization," I says, if the game of draw poker was to be wiped out. There wouldn't be no more progress, nor education, nor nothin'. I says, 'a man's got to have money to play draw poker, so there you are. Money ain't ev'rythin', but it's necessary for some purposes.' An' then he groaned an' called me a unregenerate an' went away. That's the trouble with preachers mostly. You can't never argue with 'em 'bouten they gets insulatin' an' walks away when you shows 'em they're wrong."

"There was a man come to Arkansas City 'fore 'twas as big a place as it is now. He was 'twain one of the early settlers. I reckon there wasn't no early settlers here, 'n' what I'm leavin' Arkansas City was always considerable of a place, even when they called it Napoleon, 'fore 'twas Arkansas City. But he come a right smart spell ago, an' when he come he come sudden."

"The reason of 'im comin' sudden was 't' he was blowed ashore. 'T'ole Queen of the Bayous busted her 'biller right 'longside of 't' levee one day, an' when the 'biller bust the hull boat 'pear to be disarranged, but he c'n leave Arkansas City was always considerable of a place, even when they called it Napoleon, 'fore 'twas Arkansas City. But he come a right smart spell ago, an' when he come he come sudden."

"He had his skin on him. Lastways he had the most on it, some bein' scraped off as he come through the woodwork, but he hadn't nothin' on him, 'n' he was respondin' when he come ashore. I reckon there never was a man come to Arkansas City with less on hand in the way of 'pervidin' himself 'n' that fellow. He was Arkansas City life 'n' Philetus Fraser had no money, no clothes, not even a hull skin. Knocked silly an' senseless, an' 'bouten a man, woman or child in the place 't' knowed him."

"Just naturally, 'twain't to be expected 't' nobody was goin' to take no amazin' interest in him, but 't' was quite natural, neither, to leave him lay there alone on the levee, naked an' half dead. Some on 'em picked him up an' found a old blanket, but he hadn't nothin' on him, 'n' he was respondin' when he come ashore. I reckon there never was a man come to Arkansas City with less on hand in the way of 'pervidin' himself 'n' that fellow. He was Arkansas City life 'n' Philetus Fraser had no money, no clothes, not even a hull skin. Knocked silly an' senseless, an' 'bouten a man, woman or child in the place 't' knowed him."

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no more talkin' so I didn't pay no 'tention to him while he sputtered an' jawed. I just went on fixin' the table an' chairs an' gettin' out the cards an' chips, an' I kep' a chair for the Rev. Eliphaz Knobs, an' I counted out a stack of chips for him same as the rest."

"An' when I seen what I'd did he sort of groaned, an' he says, 'Mr. Greenhut, as I understand this here case, it's charity, an' the Good Book says 'Charity covereth a multitude of sins.' I reckon maybe I'm justified this once if I do stray from the broad an' narrier path."

"I reckon you're right, I says, an' he sets down without sayin' no more. 'Well, say,' I says, 'I'd knowed as much about how much the Rev. Eliphaz Knobs knowed about the game of draw poker as I knowed as much about a little while after he set in. I'm free to say I reckon I'd ha' gone some slow about ropin' him in. As I was sayin', all this here took place a good while ago, afore Arkansas City had took first place as the real home of draw poker. We hadn't no such reputation as we have now, nor had we nothin' to do with drawin' nothin' to earn it. I played fair game, so on us. I used to play myself them days. But there wasn't no such system as there is now, an' I reckon maybe the local talent didn't found out how to depend on one another."

"The Rev. Eliphaz Knobs had took \$50 worth of chips in a dollar at a time, but he no kick about a dollar ante when we began playin', but I noticed he was almighty careful about comin' in. 'Peared like he studied some afore puttin' up his ante, an' two or three times he throwed his cards away 't' he'd studied quite a spell. Looked like he was a timid player, an' bein' as he studied some afore puttin' up his ante, he had to be 'n' takin' in nothin'. I reckoned on his first fifty bein' easy money anyway."

"Come a jackpot 't' about half a hour of playin', an' Eliphaz Knobs had took a dealer's left. He looked at his hand an' passed, an' I settin' next opened it on three deuces. There was no other comin' in, so I come to Eliphaz Knobs, an' he raised it five dollars. We was playin' table stakes."

"Well, I looked at my three deuces an' figgered them worth five dollars with two cards comin' in the draw an' somepin' like thirty dollars in the pot already, so I reckoned I'd come to Eliphaz Knobs, an' he raised it five dollars. We was playin' table stakes."

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CALLED HOME IN THE SNOW.

The Voice Heard by Dan Worrell, Crazed by His Storm Wanderings in the Woods.

LACHINE, Canada, March 4.—This has been a memorable winter in the pine woods for the cold and the great quantity of snow. The meteorological observers report that more than seven feet has actually fallen since the third week in November. The expense in shovelling miles of roads through the bush falls heavily in such winters upon the great lumber firms, and also entails much misery upon the workmen.

Dan Worrell, a struggling settler of Ottawa county, hoped to make enough money by teaming in the woods with his colts to clear himself of indebtedness. But disaster came to him, as to many another, through the severity of the season.

When he reached the central depot, to which his entry load was consigned, he was assigned to conveying provisions to the groups of shanties dependent upon that office. Owing to some confusion in the directions given to him, and in part to a terrible, driving snowstorm, he got on the wrong track.

Just at the edge of Lac Desir he followed what looked like a track, which turned off almost at a right angle. After half a mile of tedious progress he came to a stump of a big pine, where the road ended. There his horses floundered badly, and at last sank down. Their master did all he could to trample down the snow and to release the poor brutes, but soon realized his helplessness in his single-handedness.

In despair he wandered off looking for a lumber shanty where he might obtain assistance.

Late at night, thirty hours afterward, he staggered into a large shanty, perfectly dazed by misadventure and cold. The seventy or eighty good and put him to bed without bothering him with questions. Next morning he arose in a half demented condition.

He could give no account of himself and did not even know his name. For a day or two he moped about the shanty, overwhelmed with trouble, a puzzle to the shanty man, who had no idea of his name, and being a good axman, went to road making with the gang that was cutting a way into where the logs were chopped. He worked diligently and silently, as one in a maze, until early in the present month. Then he got up in the middle of the night, dressed himself and disappeared again.

Meanwhile the shanty to which his first load was sent became hard up for want of provisions. Thinking that some misadventurer had been despoiled of his goods, the shanty man sent out again a runner was sent down to the depot to report the state of affairs. There had already been surmising there about Dan, but it was commonly thought that the heavy snow had prevented his return and that the shanty boss had found something for him to do.

However, search was made for the missing team in all directions, and at last a special messenger was sent to his home. The things created intense trouble. Mrs. Worrell at last learned to the conclusion that her husband had broken through the ice with his horses, and would never be heard from again. She was in a delicate state of health, took to her bed, and appeared quite unable to rally. It was simply a case of pining away, the doctor said. She had lost her grip and unless something aroused her, there was no chance of saving her life.

On the night of Feb. 5 the woman suddenly sat up in bed and called out, "Oh, Dan! Dan! I know if you were not out there you would come back to me! Oh, Dan, quick, quick!" Her attendants feared it was her spirit calling to Dan's disembodied soul before it left her body, and were amazed when the fainting which followed the cry was succeeded by a long, tranquil sleep, the first untroubled rest she had since the receipt of the bad news.

It was at the same hour, that same night, that Dan arose in the shanty seventy miles away, dressed himself, and started out. He began to walk home. How he managed the journey he never could tell. Probably some friendly teamsters gave him an occasional lift. Possibly some one shared a meal with him. At any rate, forty-eight hours later, he lifted the latch of his own door again, hung up his coat and hat on the usual peg, and as his invariable custom had been to do, stooped to the stove door to look after the fire.

Then he quietly embraced his sick wife and sat silent and in a dazed manner on the chair beside her bed. Now and then he appeared to be about to make some explanation, but he had evidently lost all power of expression. After a long dose by the bedside, his petted child, a little lad of a year, crept into his arms. Then he laid his head back and slept. This was followed by a long sleep, from which he awoke to a partial understanding of the state of affairs, to the intense joy of his faithful wife, who speedily began to grow stronger.

The man now became conscious of some sense of loss of remembrance. With the assistance of his friends, he could recall all that happened up to the time of his leaving the depot with the load of provisions. Everything after that was blank, except that his wife had called him home in a great hurry. As it was important to settle about what had become of the horses, it was judged best for his brother-in-law to drive him back to the depot, to make inquiries there.

The manager took a great interest in what had occurred, and with great pains endeavored to recall to Dan's remembrance

the incidents of his departure upon his fateful trip. At last, all of a sudden, the man got on to his feet, his face flushed and strained; he gasped wildly for a moment or two, then staggered, and would have fallen but for his brother-in-law. His features writhed for a little time, as though he was in some kind of fit. Then his eyes began to bleed violently, and he seemed to experience great relief.

As soon as the bleeding had stopped, Dan declared that he began to remember that he had left his horses and sleigh some where, and he must go to them at once. The horses they were using was put to the sleigh again, and Dan driving this time, he and his friend set out. Speaking not a word, with strain and vision and breathing aloud almost hysterically, he retraced the journey he had made three months before. The wrong turn was noted by the relative, who said nothing.

Lac Desir was crossed, and then the horse was pulled up, and with excitement showing itself in his countenance, Dan plunged into the deep snow, scrambled through it as far as the open space extended, and then began clearing away the piled up snow blanket which covered the provision sleigh. Everything was found in perfect order, the horses lying dead in their harness, were, fired out with their exertions, the deadly cold had finished them.

By the time the two men had ascertained all much they were perspiring freely with their hard work, and to his own and his friend's surprise, Dan began with great volubility to explain all the circumstances of his dreadful experiences. He had fully recovered his sense and speech, and insisted upon going on to the jobbers' shanty, where he had found refuge and received employment.

He had a cheery welcome from his comrades, and made full explanation. He was nervous of one thing, that he had certainly heard his wife telling him to be quick the night he left so unconsciously.

The pair spent the night in the shanty. When they left in the morning, they received a note to hand in at the headquarters of the firm as they passed down. This, it turned out, was not only the order for Dan's wages while working at road cutting, but was also an order upon the wages of every man working in the crew, for sums varying from \$5 to \$10, to be paid to Dan.

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